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ABSTRACT

The nation faces the prospect of an abundant supply of highly trained educators. Foreseen imbalances in the supply and demand point to the need for more effective planning of the relationship between the lower and higher levels of education to meet occupational needs. Continuing education could help solve the dilemmas of (1) the quest for compatibility between humanistic and technological content, (2) appropriate linkages between lower education and higher education, and (3) a more rational coordination between colleges, universities, and technical institutes. There are several broad teaching strategies that might be employed to bring variable learning environments into higher education. (Author/MLF)

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# Strengthening the University-Public School Partnership

Webster defines a partnership as an arrangement whereby two or more member agencies share in the risk and profits of the business.

The story is told about two brothers who became owners of a single country house through a joint inheritance. One, a go-getter and a social climber, spent more than he could afford to remodel his section of the house with the last word in interior decorations, furniture and mechanical devices. The other brother left his half exactly as he had found it, and simply enjoyed himself in the drab interior.

"This is unfair," grumbled the first one. "You owe it to me to do something with your part of the house just as I have done with mine."

"Very well," said the brother. "I will do something with my half. I will set it on fire." And, as the story goes, he did. Sometimes cooperation among and between the various levels of education has been characterized in the same way. Rather than being partners engaged in a common mission of nurturing the development and extension of individual, intellectual and esthetic abilities, we have taken the specialized interest approach in competition for funds and resources and have maintained that our own area of specialization or service is by far the most unique and important of all.

Perhaps we need to ask ourselves the question--Does education consist of institutions in competition or people in process?

Perhaps for the first time in history our nation faces the prospect of an abundant supply of highly trained people in the field of education. This is not to say, however, that the need for better prepared and trained workers will be met in all special fields. Shortages obviously will persist in many educational

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specialties and geographic areas unless preparation efforts are shifted to those fields where shortages exist.

This state of affairs reflects the fact that we generally afford our youth the opportunity to choose how and where they want to pursue learning. In this sense we do not have a planned economy. Our supply of highly qualified workers is essentially the sum of decisions made by individuals to suit their own interests, opportunities and capabilities.

The imbalances that are foreseen in the years ahead point to the need for more effective planning of the relationships between the lower and higher levels of education to meet occupational needs and some means of attracting highly qualified and talented persons to certain educational specialties. Government and educational institutions are largely limited to influencing the choices of individuals by such actions as selective financial assistance, choice of location for business or industrial expansion, revisions of tax laws, and increasing salaries in selected occupations.

There is no suggestion in my remarks that individual choice be subverted in any way. The incentives offered by a variety of occupations will always be a key element of choice regardless of where those incentives come from.

Moreover, this discussion is about strengthening the partnership between the schools and the universities and, in that regard, it is the responsibility of our institutions for schooling to identify and teach the skills that are relevant to society's needs. It is the individual's responsibility to choose and to learn. But since it is also education's responsibility to assist those who choose wrongly or

learn skills poorly, there is a very strong case for guidance in the first place.

Over the long term, the arrangement has worked quite well whereby educational institutions identify and offer various learning programs. Learners choose and employers encourage.

We have increasing evidence that schools and colleges, universities and other agencies for learning are responding to changing occupational needs both in their courses and offerings and in their identification of retraining and upgrading programs. The tendency indeed is for the market to clear itself in the long run. This process offers a rational confidence in the future for highly trained persons at all levels of education during the remainder of this decade.

But the existence of short-term imbalances and the need for certain types of specialized programs remains a serious concern. That concern is not only with the problems of unemployment and readjustment in periods of recession which are severe, but also with the waste represented by the loss of expensively gained ability, knowledge and experience. The calamity of our current surplus of Ph. D's at the level of higher education is not so much unemployment as rising underemployment. This adds to the social costs and the human costs of unfilled expectations and the erosion of skills.

While considerable effort is being made to relate occupational needs to the programs available through educational institutions, not enough effort has been made to coincide the efforts of the K-12 system with the post secondary institutions.

A serious problem that lies ahead will be the tendency for entry requirements

for many occupations to rise, even though the jobs themselves may not require more formal schooling. Overschooling is already being demanded for entry into many jobs and professions. Such practices are highly expensive and they represent a highly discriminatory sorting and screening measure. Not only do they limit the number of options for those persons with less than a degree, but they also present the danger of massive underutilization of those with extensive schooling. Underemployment of higher educated people is already causing much campus tension and that tension could easily overflow into a new societal confrontation.

Career influences in all of education will take on new significance in the context of continuing education and the cooperative arrangements that will need to be developed among the various levels of our educational agencies and institutions.

Continuing education implies a system that alternates a period of formal schooling and periods of work throughout the lifetime of the individual. Such a system could help to solve some of the dilemmas for which so far no satisfactory answers have been found--the quest for compatibility between humanistic and technological content--appropriate linkages between lower education and higher education--and a more rational coordination between colle universities and technical institutes.

However, it m be remembered that continuing education is a concept requiring far-reaching and radical transformations both in the whole of elementary and secondary education as well as in the post secondary field.

The essential practical problem is to identify and apply measures that represent a potential step toward the reconciliation of the employment needs of society with the educational interests of the individual and to avoid changes that block the way toward such developments.

Some of our most persistent myths in education have had to do with time and its relation to learning.

Our country typically has commenced its formal learning program at age six and, although some of our states have cheated a little bit, we typically have learned from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., 180 days a year for twelve years--all at the expense of the taxpayer. Each learning activity or subject has been accorded x-numbers of minutes per week. Schools have operated nine months of the year and with the supplements which the post secondary system has added, it has taken about 18 years to become a doctor or a dentist, 16 years to become a teacher, 12 years to become a policeman or a fireman and 9 years to become a dropout.

There is nothing sacred about any of these times. While there is some evidence to support certain of these practices, there is also strong evidence to suggest the need to question them.

The whole concept of maturation for learning has been shown to have fewer boundaries than we have ever imagined. Intensive learning over a longer school day and a longer school year, properly motivated, can be very productive.

Year-round schools and night-shift schools have been affectively operated.

Twelve year programs have been successfully compressed into ten or eleven years or extended to thirteen. But the whole idea of the normal learning mode and operational pattern has been brought into serious question by the promise of continuing education programs and practices.

While some of the time arrangements we have used in education have been convenient to parents, the teaching staff, the labor market and holiday patterns, it is a bit tempting to ask--"Which has adapted to which?"

Generally we continue with such practices because that is what we have always done. In doing so school administrators have, in fact, denied that much has changed in the educational sector in the last 100 years. Educational institutions have tailored learning to available time instead of making time fit the variables of learning.

Teachers have developed their methods according to available time--introduction, ten minutes; seat work, twenty minutes; summary, seven minutes; clean-up, three minutes. Both time and methods must now be varied to suit individualized learning arrangements. More learners, we have found, operate on fast and/or slow time than on normal time, whatever that is. Normal learning time is like a stopped clock--fortunately it is right twice each day.

The time maturation interlock becomes increasingly mythical as students reach the last year of their secondary programs and go on to post secondary learning opportunities. Nowhere is the time element more fanciful than in the granting of degrees in higher education. The present time bound degree structure works a considerable hardship on thousands of students each year,

as well as on the taxpayers. If work expands to fill available time, then so does schooling. Similarly, the high cost of building, equipping and staffing and operating a post secondary institution is directly related to the length of its degree programs.

In a recent report, the Carnegie Commission argued that a number of both undergraduate and graduate degree programs could be immediately reduced by one year for many candidates and eventually for most. The rep also concludes that time spent on the Ph. D. and other professional degrees can be reduced by one or two years without any great sacrifice in quality.

The concept of cooperative education, the partnership between the scho and the universities, presupposes that life is a continuing process of full and part-time study interposed by work and learning opportunities. A diplo or a degree is therefore only an interim credential that starts to die the moment that it is born. The improvement of professional qualifications occurs after the degree--not before it.

If we consider free public education one of the major benefits society bestows upon its members, then many adults have the right to ask--yes, but what have the schools and the universities done for me lately? Why sho the principal benefits of free public education be concentrated only on the years from five to eighteen?

Such a policy is shameful, given the mounting need for continuing education. And ultimately, there must be some kind of a national education bank or fund that credits each person with, say, sixteen years of freely cho

schooling at public expense. One of the conditions of withdrawal from that fund should be that no person may use more than twelve years consecutively. Indeed, if the educational bank were combined with the notion that all diplomas and degrees, like passports, expired at the end of five or ten years, we would have a built-in guarantee against personal and socio-economic obsolescence.

Such ideas as these must be expressed from time to time so that schooling is ripped loose from its obsolete time bases. Only then can we make learning an opportunity to be chosen for personal development, rather than the social necessity to be endured as a means of access to consumer pleasures.

Nowhere in our system of education will the development of responsive learning environments of this kind be more traumatic than in our post secondary institutions and perhaps nowhere is it more necessary.

While there are some very notable exceptions, university teaching methods, particularly in undergraduate studies, are disagreeably uniform and tedious. Variable learning environments must be implemented and soon - not only because they cure monotony, but also because they allow better fit for the learner. The uniform learning environment is not much different from most other uniforms. It tends to be either too tight, or too loose, to suit individual learners and their needs. The ill-fitting, tweedy methods of academia are highly resistant to all new tailors. Some sharp needles will be required. But in the partnership arrangement, the schools can show the universities how to make the necessary adjustments and adaptations.

There are several broad teaching strategies that might be employed to bring variable learning environments into higher education. They merit careful scrutiny in the years immediately ahead by our colleges and universities. One of these is to replace in certain instances our existing traditional programs with temporary learning alliances.

A learning alliance, like the program, would come in many different forms, could be easily established, and would be highly flexible.

It would monitor the time of those students enrolled in its broadly designed subjects; it would emphasize collective planning and cooperative teaching between the secondary schools and the post secondary institutions. But, unlike most current programs, the learning alliance would have a built-in capacity for rejuvenation. Intended to live many lives, the alliance would generate diverse studies in numerous reincarnations.

Under the alliance concept, any group of three or more instructors could band together to form a teaching company. This company would take out a short-term lease and proceed to explore a particular learning propert Ideally, the company would be rich in human capital and the property would contain the ore of many disciplines. There might be many such alliances within a faculty--each exploring different properties, using different metho having different articles of association. Exploration as a member of such a party should be stimulating. Neither the explorers nor professors should be satisfied in a permanent camp.

Our traditional programs could easily coexist with these alliances. The call here is for diversity, not discrimination. Many students and professors will always prefer the institutional mode and will perform nobly in uniform, traditional learning environments. But the alliance concept, it appears to me, allows innovation to be easily implemented, with a minimum of expense and institutional commitment. And nowhere would there be better arrangements for testing the viability of such a situation than in the field of professional education. There are a number of assumptions that make this so.

The strong societal forces which are impacting upon school systems and universities, are creating continuing demands for educational change and improvement.

In any effort to achieve change through university and school system collaboration, the generation and use of ideas is a very important strategy.

School systems and colleges of education are so interdependent in effective idea generation and use that the success of one is to a considerable degree dependent upon the success of the other.

There is a strong need for collaborative, school system--university experiments directed at the effective generation and use of ideas to improve practice.

Within the universities there is a great deal more and varied talent across the discipline than is available in the immediate environment of any single school system. Within school systems, particularly larger ones, there is a wide range of specialized talent and skill. Through a projected

partnership arrangement, a greater critical mass of talent could be brought to bear upon the leadership problems and opportunities than is possible through current practices and existing arrangements.

The professional opportunities inherent in such a partnership are so challenging that I believe both university and school system participants would voluntarily contribute time and talent to planning program activities.

Assuming the acceptance of this kind of partnership concept, the period remaining in this decade through 1979 offers a reasonable time span to test the viability of the learning alliance idea.

An important test of the feasibility of such an alliance would be the degree to which mutually shared and valued objectives could be formulated by both school and university leaders. The partnership could facilitate joint-search by university personnel and school system leaders for more effective solutions to educational problems. School systems and university personnel should both participate in defining the partnership functions and activities.

The partnership should provide unique professor/administrator communication links which, in turn, could lead to a range of useful outcomes both anticipated and unanticipated. Research development and training processes in universities could be improved as a result of the partnership as should management and leadership role performance in local school systems.

There are several missions of such a partnership concept. One could be to improve management development programs in school systems and

preparatory programs in the universities. This mission is closely related to many universities' mission of improving preparatory programs for administrative personnel. Through the partnership arrangement, the mission would be pursued in a far broader context than that which currently exists and with a wider aid from and a closer alliance with school leaders in the field. Greater emphasis would be placed upon improved in-service education and upon effective relationships between pre-service and in-service education than in past settings.

A second mission would be to provide a future-oriented scanning function or sensing mechanism designed to help both local school systems and universities adapt to emergent and projected events. This mission would require a sensing effort to identify upcoming problems and issues likely to confront educational leaders in the future. To identify and illuminate emergent policy issues, methods for studying the future should be employed as would existing substantive studies of society and education. Use of concepts about the future through adaptive planning would be encouraged.

A third mission might be to achieve more effective research and development in educational administration. This mission might concentrate largely, but not exclusively, upon applied research and development. R & D efforts, for example, could be directed at such problem areas as management training, evaluation systems and personnel selection. Impact research to determine effects on administrators and organizations of such matters as conflict, negotiations and training, could also be undertaken.

Given these less than complete assumptions and possible mission targets, there are a number of partnership outcomes that might be speculated about

as follows:

1. A new dynamic might result that would facilitate renewal and change efforts in both school systems and universities. To create the dynamic the separateness tendencies of the past five to ten years on the part of the universities and the school systems would need to be reversed and mutually beneficial interaction and self-help patterns would need to be discovered and implemented.
2. A closer melding and cooperative expression of the talents of school system leaders and professors to advance the field of educational administration would emerge. Melding would involve the development of more mutually supportive attitudes, more systematic and fruitful communication channels, more collaborative programs and a high expression of leadership talent and intellect on the part of both professors and administrators.
3. More effective ways of developing and using knowledge in the contexts of preparation and in setting of practice might result. To realize this outcome, the so-called theory/practice gap would need to be narrowed and new strategies for generating and using knowledge in universities and school systems would need to be implemented.
4. Tested products, communication networks, organization arrangements and substantive ideas of sufficient value to be diffused to school systems and institutions of higher education beyond the partnership would surely be produced. To achieve these results, innovations will need to be

developed, which will take into account the insights of those intimat familiar with school system practice as well as the ideas of those who are not constrained by current practices.

5. The application of more wide-ranging and varied talent networks than in the past to the increasingly complex challenges of educationa leadership could be tested. Such talent networks would draw upon individuals in school systems, universities and perhaps other agenc and would encompass concepts of the idea that as man asks more of himself, he needs structure and organization vast and complex. He is at a point of greater freedom as well as greater dependence. He seeks a new balance between the one and the many.

To establish such a partnership the question of support has to be raised not only as it relates to the idea of the partnership, but also as it relates to the implementation of some of the activities that would necessarily result from the partnership deliberation.

One alternative for support would be to seek in the initial stages externa support from foundations or government agencies with such support covering both planning and implementation activities. There are obvious advantages and disadvantages to this approach. The preparation of a proposal might lea to overly hasty or unsound initial commitments. There might also be inadeq time to define with integrity sound purposes for the partnership and to seek o those activities of most value to the participating agencies.

A second approach to the idea might be a membership payment arrangem

with school systems in the partnership which would provide sufficient funds to support both planning and implementation efforts. Under this approach, a substantial amount of time might be devoted to the development of the partnership and the initial efforts might be directed at clarifying the partnership's mission, assessing needs related to the mission and developing objectiv for implementing a number of activities.

This approach also has certain limitations. It might create difficulty for some school systems in obtaining school board approval for membership. Pressure to undertake major programmatic efforts might also lead to less quality results, whether measured by the quality of products achieved or their relevance to the needs of those in the partnership.

A third approach might be to establish a service concept for the partnersh with the service payment following the mode already established for certain kinds of professional support arrangements. This procedure would necessari alter the early mission work of the alliance, but it could provide school syste and universities better opportunities to assess the costs and benefits of the effort and for determining their degree of commitment to participate in it. This approach would also provide opportunities for the exploration and search for longer range alternatives for supporting the partnership over time. Obviously this approach has the limitation of constituting less than an all out effort which, in turn, could be perceived by some as assigning less priority to the partnership than it might deserve.

These ideas represent an over-simplified approach to strengthening

university/public school relations. There obviously are a number of key questions to be considered such as how would a partnership of this kind be better than the relationships which already exist between school systems and their surrounding institutions of higher education? Who will gain most from the partnership--the university or the school system? Is the partnership feasible, given the different styles and orientations of professors and school leaders? Should a partnership not seek to capitalize upon the diversity of the school systems within it rather than to look for common approaches?

These and other questions obviously must be pursued and reasonable solutions should be found to the problems and issues confronting the members of any partnership arrangement. The system of alternate opportunities for learning offered by business, industry, labor unions, proprietary institutions, the military, cultural agencies and the like, is emerging as a strong competitor and its impact will continue to increase. Our formal educational system, whether traditional or non-traditional, will have to recognize this competition fairly and dispassionately and come to terms with it. Eventually the older system will learn that these alternate means can provide an added strength by performing the services that would not normally be available to either institution.

In summary, I guess that I am saying that the lower and higher schools are not adversaries. One will not supplant or supersede the other. They are in all actualities, partners in the single grand enterprise of promoting learning. This assertion is neither empty rhetoric nor a retreat to consen

It is a realistic affirmation of the total possibility awaiting us. Education to match our needs--as individuals and as a society--this is everyone's goal. We should work toward it through a partnership enthusiastically, wi a sense of commitment and with confidence that there are good and valid w to achieve it--ways that do not lessen quality even when they are different from our traditional standards. All the resources for learning, wherever they may be found and used, can be helpful in this task. All people of goo will, in education or elsewhere, can be partners in an enterprise so fundamental to a democratic nation.